

**Testimony of Susan Lloyd Yolen, Vice President, Public Affairs & Communication  
Planned Parenthood of Connecticut, Inc.**

**February 20, 2009**

**Appropriations Committee Hearing on the Department of Public Health**

Good afternoon, Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and members of the committee. I am Susan Yolen, Vice President for Public Affairs & Communication at Planned Parenthood of Connecticut, the state's largest provider of family planning and reproductive health.

I am here to ask for your ongoing support for the DPH family planning program of just over \$1 million annually. This grant supports preventive reproductive health care, pregnancy prevention, testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV testing at 18 Planned Parenthood centers across the state, in addition to four sites operated by subcontracting health care agencies.

Last year, this program provided family planning services to 43,323 women: *one and a half times more than the contracted goal for the program*. This increased demand is likely an early result of the economic downturn and only likely to grow as jobs and health insurance are lost. DPH funds allow us to offer services on a sliding fee scale, providing the most effective new methods of birth control, which can cost up to \$90 a month at retail prices.

- 39% of family planning clients served by this grant are age 21 or younger;
- 24% of the clients are sexually active teens;
- 79% have family incomes at or below 250% of the federal poverty level;
- 46% are people of color (African American, Latina, Asian, Native American).

Low income women who choose to receive state-funded family planning services can prevent or postpone pregnancies that will in many cases become covered by HUSKY at much greater cost to the state. As a result, research by the Guttmacher Institute shows a savings of \$4 for every public dollar spent on family planning.

Planned Parenthood is mindful of the painful cuts that may result from our current fiscal crisis. But this is not a time for an across-the-board approach to public health programs that will help folks get through the next few years with the tools they need to prevent unplanned pregnancy and to avoid communicable disease that can impact the larger population. We ask that you consider each DPH cut carefully, and that family planning, more vital now than ever, continue to be an investment that we make.

Thank you.